

Testimony of Richard Parks
SB-345

Madam Chair, members of the committee, for the record my name is Richard Parks. I own and operate a sporting goods store and fishing outfitting business in Gardiner, Montana. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today representing the Northern Plains Resource Council. We are a grassroots organization of farmers, ranchers, and other Montanans working to protect our communities, air, land, and water.

Our members have recognized for a long time that a wide open free for all in land use is not in their best interests. When the "golden rule" applies, that is "he who has the gold - rules" the guy with the most gold and the fastest bulldozer makes the rules for everybody else without regard to what is good for the community or the land.

A lot of our members own stream bank land to which this bill would apply. One consequence of unregulated stream bank development is increased losses from flooding. This inspires people to try to protect their investment with rip rap and diking which mostly works to damage their neighbor's property. It is time to get off the treadmill and this bill is a step forward.

Another aspect of the legislation is that it helps protect the value of the riparian habitats and businesses like mine that depend on those habitats. Here are just a few numbers to chew on : fishing outfitters in Montana served 63800 client days during 2005. (more in 2006 but the numbers are not yet crunched)) This generated \$34.2 million in direct revenues and when the indirect and induced revenues are figured in, \$51.6 million in economic activity.

This is one of the golden eggs this goose lays. I ask you to help protect this goose by passing SB-345.

Richard C. Parks